VALIDATION OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT

Overview

Graduate students in certain programs may be given credit for post-baccalaureate experiential learning which appropriately meets both the objectives of their degree programs and the general criteria established by the Graduate Academic Committee as explained below.

Experiential learning is defined as “learning acquired through work experience, life experience, service experience and other special accomplishments which occur outside the classroom” (Adopted from the 1977 statement by the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States).

The following criteria must be met to ensure the academic integrity of credit granted for experiential learning:

1. The experience must be significant and pertinent to the degree program.
2. The experience must have taken place since the earning of the undergraduate degree and must result in graduate-level learning.
3. The experience must be validated. Validation is met by students’ presentation of written documentary evidence describing the nature, extent, and quality of learning experiences, as well as the specific times, places, and circumstances in which they occurred.
   a. In the case of experience gained before matriculation for the master’s degree, students’ material must be given documented review and confirmation by persons determined by the graduate faculty to be appropriate professionals who have witnessed the students’ accomplishments and can attest to the significance and graduate quality of the learning experiences.
   b. In the case of experience gained after matriculation for the master’s degree, students’ learning will be supervised by appropriate non-faculty professionals in the areas of the experiences. Students’ faculty advisors will monitor the planning, establishment of goals, expenditure of time and effort, and resultant learning. On-site evaluation of the experiences will be made by appropriate faculty members where the learning experience is presently observable. Written account and evaluation of the several phases of the experiences will be submitted by the evaluating faculty members to the advisors for keeping in the students’ academic files.
4. All documented evidence and reviews of students’ learning experiences must meet the approval of the department chair and program faculty before the granting of credit.

Credit for experiential learning is not granted until all degree requirements are met. Students who are interested in applying for credit for experience should begin this procedure well in advance of graduation, but not before earning at least 12 credits with a grade of ‘B’ or better. The usual number of credits to be granted for experiential learning is three. A maximum of six credits may be granted. Each program makes its own determination of the application of experiential learning toward completion of degree requirements. Students in teaching certification programs should be aware that the credit for experience is not ordinarily a possibility.
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Process for Granting Credit

1. The student will prepare materials representing the experience for which he/she is requesting credit. Materials must be submitted with the Form for Validation of Credit for Experience or Proficiency.

2. The advisor will review these materials. If the experience merits credit, the advisor will ask the department chair and at least one additional faculty member within the appropriate discipline to make a judgment regarding credits to be awarded. If necessary, the advisor will ask faculty or a consultant to observe the applicant on location.

3. If the experience merits graduate credit, the advisor, evaluators and department chair will sign the Form for Validation of Credit for Experience or Proficiency and submit it to the appropriate Dean for final approval.

4. When the procedure has been completed, the school Dean will notify the Registrar and the Bursar. The tuition charge is $100 per graduate credit.
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I. Introduction

Portfolio credit is granted for verifiable graduate-level learning derived from one’s experiences. Graduate-level learning is defined as an integration of theory and practice applicable outside the specific context in which it was acquired. For example, an analysis of the policies of a specific school district relative to bilingual children must include a knowledge of appropriate theory, evidence of the application of that theory and confirmation that the learning yielded by the analysis is applicable to other types of institutions.

II. The Form for Validation of Credit for Experience or Proficiency must accompany the following credentials:

a. Essay

Describe the experience, the ways in which you were personally involved and how each experience contributed to your learning, making explicit theoretical connections where relevant. Where appropriate, describe the manner in which you have demonstrated acquired proficiency. Extrapolate learning outcomes beyond the specific situation described.

b. Documentation

i. Two letters of Support
Submit two letters from people who are qualified to evaluate the level of learning gained from this experience. At least one letter should be written by an on-site supervisor. These letters should validate specific knowledge and competence and be composed on original letterhead with an original signature. Guidelines for writers of supporting documentation are attached.

ii. Evidence of Support
Submit direct evidence of work you have produced. Evidence must appear in the form of written materials; audio or visual tapes; computer programs; artwork; photographs; teaching materials for classes you have taught; outlines of speeches; interviews or presentations; discussion of books read or research conducted.

iii. Evidence of Accomplishments
Submit indirect evidence of your accomplishments including your job description, press clippings, employer/supervisor evaluations and photocopies of awards or certificates.

Large unwieldy forms of documentation may be submitted under separate cover. They must bear your name and be clearly labeled.

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GUIDELINES FOR WRITERS OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

You have been asked to write a letter in support of a student’s request for academic graduate credit for experience or proficiency. As the writer of such a recommendation, you must have observed or supervised this Saint Rose student and be qualified to evaluate the level of learning gained from the experience. The following guidelines may help you understand the evaluative criteria used by The College of Saint Rose.

I. Describe the learning experience and your relationship to the student.

II. How did you determine the learning took place? This may be through observation and evaluation, by an examination of written materials or creative design, by an interview or through a written or oral examination.

III. What specific competencies or theories did the student learn?

IV. What level of knowledge was needed for the learning to take place?
   a. Beginning – Basic principles or introductory skills were required for learning to take place.
   b. Intermediate – Some prior knowledge of skill was present.
   c. Advanced – Considerable prior knowledge or skill was necessary to learn the subject matter.

V. What level of learning was achieved?

VI. Does the learning warrant consideration for graduate-level credit or partial credit?

Letterhead stationary is preferred whenever possible and each page should bear your signature. Please include a description of your own academic and professional background or qualification to write on behalf of the student.

This recommendation should be returned directly to the student.
FORM FOR VALIDATION OF CREDIT FOR EXPERIENCE OR PROFICIENCY

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________

Program of Study: ___________________________ Student ID: __________________

Designation (Type of Experience, etc.): ______________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Topic: ____________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Means of Validation: ________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Credits Assigned (Maximum of 6 credits): ____________ ($100/per credit)

Approval:

_________________________________________ Date _____________________________

Advisor’s Signature Date Program Coordinator Date

Evaluators:

__________________________________________________________________________ Date

__________________________________________________________________________ Date

__________________________________________________________________________ Date

School Dean ___________________________ Date _____________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Business Office: ___________________________ Billed: _______________________

Cc: Student Registrar Bursar Advisor Date _____________________________

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